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Bloomsburg Then vs. Bloomsburg Now  
  
**Problem**

While studying the lives of college students today, I thought to myself how different we are from one another. Then I took it further in thinking, if we are so different from our own peers, how different are we as a college to generations in the past? What was Bloomsburg University like in the past compared to now? Was it a more strict school? How has it grown as a university? Were students interested in the same activities/sports teams that students are interested in now? In the generations before our time it was so much more uncommon to go to college, even for our parents. In today’s society there is such a pressure on young adults to go to college and get an education, so why if there is this great pressure, does college seem more liberal today? During my studies, I will answer these questions with the use of my ethnographic knowledge.

**Background**

In Nathan’s *My Freshman Year,* she conducts a study to go into her own University to study the college freshman. Nathan, an anthropology professor at AnyU, is not the first person to conduct a study like this, yet she still feels the need to go out into the field to find her own answers. Michael Moffat, a professor at Rutgers University, also conducted this same study but around twenty years earlier. I guess my thinking process was going in the same direction while digging into my subject. I know there were other people who had answered my questions but I wanted to find them out for myself with my own perspectives on things (Nathan, pg. 4).

**Methods**

To answer my questions in the first section, I first interviewed the research center’s employee. He told me a lot of general points about the University and where to find some more details using the library’s website. I then looked in depth at the online collections of Bloomsburg University’s past. It contained yearbooks, student handbooks, catalogs, and pictures of everything since Bloomsburg University was established as an Academy in 1839. As far as the recent information on Bloomsburg University, I used the school website as well as my observations on being a student here at the University. In Ethnography, Heath & Street describe ethnography as “observing, comparing, reflecting, and assessing.” (Heath & Street 2008, pg. 2) During this project, I used these guided terms to figure out everything there is to know about Bloomsburg in general. In my findings section you will find my observations compared to one another, and then my reflections and assessments.  
  
**Findings**

During my research I found that Bloomsburg as a university has changed a great deal, not only in size and popularity, but also it has grown immensely in the sense of regulations and education.1 During my PowerPoint slideshow I talk about the history of Bloomsburg a lot, mostly the campus’ growth but here I want to discuss how our education and regulations have changed as well. I thought that I needed to explain my thoughts more thoroughly in the form of a paper, rather than just bullet points and a few pictures. I needed to express how much the students have changed as well, so the PowerPoint slideshow is there to back up my thoughts stated in this section.

When the school was declared a literary institute and a state normal school they published documents stating rules, regulations, and just about Bloomsburg in general. In most of the earlier documents during the eighteen hundreds, some of the requirements were that you had to attend “Public Worship” on Sunday that your parents taught and afternoon classes dealing with worship. In the early 1900’s, one catalog stated that boys and girls were separated and during the school days you were not allowed to talk with one another. There were even hired faculty observing the students in the halls and around campus watching to make sure you were there for the education and the education only. If you were caught mingling with the opposite sex too much, they expelled you. One of the catalogs from the year of 1901 stated these rules as “character building.” They even stated as far as activates go, that you were required by the school to be involved in one extra-circular activity (40-50).2 I feel that college in the early 1900’s was taken very seriously and definitely stricter than in today’s society. I think this is true because while doing my time diaries, I found that it was a lot more common for people of generations before us to not go to college at all.

Parents and guardians are requested to not send any packages or even call the students unless it is an absolute emergency. The catalog talks about how inviting friends to your campus is distracting to the students as well as going home for a short amount of time. Students in the early 1900’s could enroll in the school at any time of the year, because there were classes being taught all year round. Students are also expected to supply their own appropriate clothing but are only allowed “12 articles of plain clothing in the wash per week.”During school today, many students have their friends or significant others from home come up and even stay the weekend. Today’s University also has a weekend designated to inviting parents and family to the school, where as in the past you could not even call. This is where Bloomsburg is welcoming families and parents to visit their children, while the school sponsors events and activities outside. In 1901, school tuition summed up to around $460.00 for full year education and housing (40-50).

In 1950, the education of the school turned more towards the teaching direction, hence the name State Teachers College. The cost of a full year’s education and housing cost around $600.00. Guests were now allowed but they had to be approved by the Dean of Women or the Dean of Men. Students taking gym classes were required to wear the gymnasiums’ uniforms provided to you at the school bookstore to be purchased. The laundry rule still applied where the students were only allowed 12 articles of clothing washed a week. The students were still required by the school to participate in any extra-circular activity (29-35). Students now had to apply to get into the Teachers College including coming for an interview. Students who were incoming freshman often got “bullied or hazed” by upperclassmen. They had to wear these beanie hats distinguishing them from the rest of the groups. They also had to wear a big sign over their clothes stating their name and where they were from. Upperclassmen often approached these students and asked many random questions about anything and the freshmen would have to answer correctly or else they were made fun of. This was a known trait throughout the school and was never looked down upon until around 1970 when Harvey Andruss left the school. Another thing that I found really interesting in my interviews was that there was a separate section in the school yearbooks just for drinking and partying. They actually had pictures of students at parties with alcohol in hands, and there was even a photo of a student doing a keg stand (Dunkelberger).

In 2003, things were very different then the in the 1900’sNow of course there are tons of not only undergraduate majors and minors but graduate degrees as well. Students are now given tests to see where they are at before entering college to make sure they are in the correct classes that they need to take. The college is a public college; therefore, it cannot force you to go to any religious ceremonies. The campus is now a dry campus, meaning that there is zero tolerance for alcohol even if you are of age to drink. Basically all of the rules and regulations that were once put in place before are banished. The idea of “college” has changed a lot over the years. It is now viewed as an experience for young adults to find their independence while getting an education. Most students come to college to get a fresh start and to meet new people. Some students may even choose a college, just because of the entire college life portion, and not so much how highly ranked the college is in the teaching of a certain field. College rules and requirements are all geared towards your major or field work of choice. College in the current years is now with education (173-207).  
**Conclusion**

While looking in depth at the University’s policies and requirements, I found a great difference in just about everything. College is a place where you come to meet new people and get the education you need to further your life in the career path that you have chosen. When the school had first opened it had almost a negative look on everything besides education, while at Bloomsburg University today, we almost promote social interaction on an everyday basis. There are tons of clubs, sports teams, and just classes in general that have both the male and female genders, which back then would have had you expelled. Although some of the clubs and sports are the same as in the past, there is one hundred times more clubs then before. They are limitless and there is a club for everyone. The clubs were obviously mandatory in the earlier years as stated above but now I feel as if they do not have to be mandatory because most students want to be in those clubs or activities for various reasons. The clubs in the earlier years were also very limited to things like choral groups, the newspaper, and community government association. Bloomsburg University has grown as a college in so many ways. It has grown as a community of staff and students, and it has grown as the beautiful campus it is known for today. Along with the university growing and expanding, so has the idea of what it means to be educated. It has grown in the sense that you need to be well rounded. Educated individuals can hold a knowledgeable conversation about a variety of topics, whether it is about school materials, or the current events happening in the world. I think being educated could also simply mean, to be knowledgeable in general. Bloomsburg University is a place where people come to get an education as well as an experience and everyone here at the University in 2011, makes that happen everyday.3

**Websites**

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